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CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER

The Dark
Brigade
Continues



Larry Wachowski
Miran Kim

Scott Hampton
John Van Fleet

Erik Saltzgeber
Mark Bloodworth

Dwayne McDuffie
D.G. Chichester
Denys Cowan
George Pratt



Jonathan
D.G. Chichester

Closets
Larry Wachowski
writer
Mian Kim
artist
John Costanza
letterer

The Tontine
Scott Hampton
writer/artist
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**Devil's Brigade Part Four:
Shoot High, Break Low**
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**Devil's Brigade Part Five:
Passion**
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CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRaiser™ Book 2
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221c. looks difficult, yet I think it is better
 and on all hand that discontinued planning solved

FOREWORD

While Hell's forces are legion, there's only so much a body can do (and *that* experience we're saving for the trial). But should an unholy desire for more Barker beasts tug at what's left of your soul, we offer alternate abnormalities from these offices . . . and beyond . . .

For the literary minded, two newsletters oozing oddities about his Clive-ness. **Dread** promises interviews with the likes of *Hellraiser 2/3* screenwriter Peter Atkins, writer/editor yours truly, and commentary from Clive himself; they also feature unique Barker-related merchandise. For further info, write them at 10 Oakville Street, Staten Island, NY 10314. Also lurking is the fanzine of the **Clive Barker Appreciation Organization**, a fan club experience devoted to our favorite fearsome Englishman; they offer details at the bargain price of a self-addressed stamped envelope sent to 96 Summer Street, Medford, MA 02155-4434.

Those preferring the hands on approach will want the ghoulish goodies from the aptly named **Screamin' Products**. Their hellishly accurate model kits are based on the *Hellraiser* series of films, including Pinhead (pins included!), Chatterer (dental plan optional!) and a life-sized puzzle box (easily assembled, open at your own risk!). Write for **Screamin'** catalog at P.O. Box 6577, Albany, NY 12206; tell 'em Leviathan sent ya.

Closer to home, we're unleashing **Jihad**, the oft-threatened **Hellraiser-Nightbreed** crossover, marking the first collision *ever* of two of Clive's creations. It's all-out war this October between the orderly Cenobites and the impassioned 'Breed, courtesy the brilliant talents of Mr. Paul Johnson (late of DC's **The Books of Magic**, currently working more magic for Touchmark); Paul's coaxed his brush into capturing some of the most manic/marvelous moments ever to soon haunt your dreams. Oh, and I wrote it . . . which is nice.

This issue's mid-wives: Honorary Cenobites Scott Hampton and John Van Fleet on "The Tontine," a pact of empty friendship and loaded revolvers; Scott penned this brooding tale, then tag-teaming with John on the intense artwork. Larry Wachowski, of the *Hellraiser* compendium **The Book of the Damned**, takes time to open a few "Closets" — no skeletons, but twisted mother/son unions abound; new to our pages is artist Miran Kim, whose talents we hope to see more of soon. And *The Devil's Brigade* thunders on, with "Shoot High, Break Low," dangerous doings of the psychotic Cenobite Atkins, via writer Erik Saltzgaber and artist Mark Bloodworth; and in "Passion," medical wonders meet the Machiavellian wickedness of Pinhead — that's by way of writers moi and Dwayne McDuffie (**Deathlok**) and artist extraordinaire Denys Cowan (also **Deathlok**, along with the upcoming **Frank** (enstein) from Harvey Comics).

As always, gentle reader, it's our fervent desire to present you with as much pleasure as we can eke out of pain. Forgive us our occasional inadequacies of only being able to cram so much into so many pages, for we're only human . . . for now, anyway . . .

Daniel Chichester
consulting editor



CIGARETTES AND YELLOW CANDY. THE SMELL SCARES HIM.



HE SHOULDN'T BE IN HERE.



IN HIS POCKET, HIS SWEATING PALM PRESSES AGAINST THE BUTTER KNIFE.



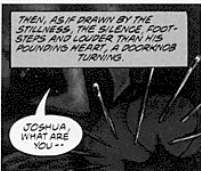
WHY IS IT ALWAYS LOCKED? WHAT IS IT WHAT'S IN THERE?

HURRY.



JUST HURRY.

A CLICK. A CRACK AND IT'S OPEN.



THEN, AS IF DRAWN BY THE STILLNESS, THE SILENCE, FOOTSTEPS AND LOUDER THAN HIS POUNDING HEART, A DOORKNOB TURNING.

JOSHUA,
WHAT ARE
YOU --



OH NO! DON'T YOU TOUCH HER!

DAMN YOU!
DAMN YOU!

NO-NO-
MOMMA--
PLE--

I'M SORRY,
MOMMA, PLEASE--
I JUST WANTED--



YOU WILL BE SORRY! I HATE YOU FOR THIS! YOU'VE HURT YOUR MOTHER!

YOU ASKED FOR THIS! REMEMBER THAT! AND YOU BETTER NOT CRY! YOU HEAR ME? DON'T YOU DARE CRY!

STOP CRYING! I CAN'T STAND IT! ALL RIGHT...

I'LL MAKE
YOU STOP!

CLOSETS

Larry Wachowski
writer
Miran Kim
artist
John Costanza
letterer



YOU KNOW
WHERE YOU ARE
GOING...

THIS IS WHY
WE'RE ALONE.

THIS IS WHY
YOUR FATHER
LEFT US!



HE SAW WHAT
A MONSTER YOU
WERE BECOMING!

FILLED
WITH HATE.
WITH
MEANNESS.

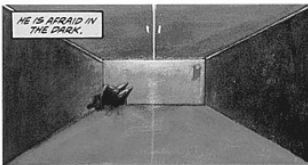


YOU'RE
NOT FIT FOR
THIS WORLD.

MAYBE I SHOULD
LEAVE YOU IN HERE.
FOREVER.



YOU PRAY, YOUNG
MAN. YOU ASK GOD
TO FORGIVE YOU.
I WON'T.

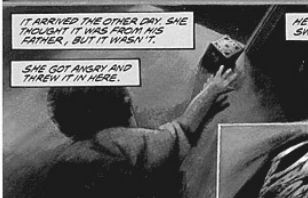


HE IS AFRAID IN
THE DARK.



HE WANTS TO CRY, BUT
IT HURTS TOO MUCH.

IN THE CORNER...
THAT BOX.



IT ARRIVED THE OTHER DAY. SHE
THOUGHT IT WAS FROM HIS
FATHER, BUT IT WASN'T.

SHE GOT ANGRY AND
THREW IT IN HERE.



HE HOLDS IT IN HIS
SWEATING PALM.

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S
IN THERE?



A CLICK.
A CRACK...

AND THEN, AS IF
DRAWN, FOOTSTEPS;
A DOORKNOB TURNING...

COME CHILD,
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW.
COME WITH ME.

LET ME EASE YOU
FROM YOUR FEAR.
LET ME HELP YOU
WITH YOUR PAIN.



WHAT IS IT?
WHAT
HAPPENED?



IT'S HER LITTLE
BOY. HE'S MISSING.
SHAME.



IF YOU SEE
ANYTHING...



YES?
WHAT IS
IT?



THE
POLICEMAN
TOLD ME. I'M
TERRIBLY
SORRY.

MY CHILDREN
KNEW YOUR BOY--I
MEAN *KNOW*--OH
GOD, I'M SORRY, I
SHOULD JUST--



WOULD YOU
LIKE SOME
COFFEE?

YES, SURE.
THAT WOULD
BE NICE.



YOU CAN'T IMAGINE.
IT'S SO QUIET NOW.
SO... EMPTY. AWFUL.
I HAVEN'T FELT LIKE
THIS SINCE MY
FATHER DIED TWELVE
YEARS AGO.

YOUR
FATHER'S
DEAD? BUT
YOUR NEEDLE-
POINT--?

OH GOD, UMM... HA.
WELL, EVERY FATHER'S DAY
I MAKE HIM SOMETHING.
I KNOW IT'S STUPID, I'M
STUPID, BUT I GUESS I'LL
ALWAYS BE "DADDY'S LITTLE
GIRL."

HA.

MORE
SUGAR?



BEFORE I CALLED THE POLICE,
I WENT TO THE CHURCH AND I
PRAYED, AND PRAYED I WAS SO
TERRIFIED THEY'D ARREST ME. I
KEEP BLAMING MYSELF; IF I HAD
DONE THIS OR THAT, YOU EVER
FEEL LIKE THAT? LIKE YOU CAN'T
DO ANYTHING RIGHT?

IT'S ALMOST FUNNY. I LOST MY
FATHER... MY HUSBAND... MY BOY.
YOU KNOW WHAT MY FATHER
WOULD SAY? "ELLIE"--HE
ALWAYS CALLED ME THAT--
"ELLIE, YOU KNOW IT'S YOUR
OWN DAMN FAULT" AND
I'D BELIEVE HIM.

OH LORD, I SOUND SO PATHETIC.
I'M SORRY, I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, THEY'LL
FIND HIM. I KNOW IT, WOULD YOU
LIKE A CANDY?



HOW ABOUT A
CANDY, ELLIE?

NO, DADDY. I WANT MY
HANNIE... PLEASE... I LOST
HER! PLEASE, HELP ME
FIND HER!

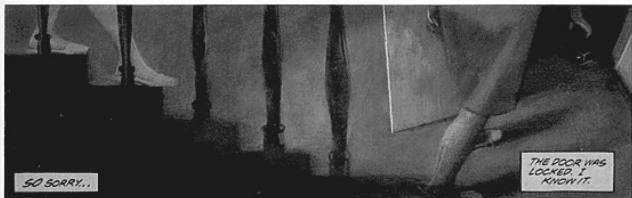
OKAY, COME WITH ME,
ELLIE. I THINK I KNOW
WHERE TO LOOK.



OH, JOSH. WHERE ARE
YOU? PLEASE COME
HOME. I'M SO SORRY.

DON'T LEAVE
ME ALONE.

I'M AFRAID.



SO SORRY...

THE DOOR WAS
LOCKED. I
KNOW IT.



IT WAS THIS.

SOMEONE THIS TOOK
YOU AWAY FROM ME.

DEAR GOD, LET ME
FIND HIM. LET ME
FIND MY CHILD,
BEFORE IT'S TOO...

...LATE.

JOSH?

JOSHUA!

MOMMA!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU. OH, GOD JOSH, WHAT HAVE I DONE? I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY--

DON'T BE SORRY, ELLEN. IT'S YOUR PAIN CARVED IN HIS FACE. IT'S A MASTER-PIECE.

WELCOME, ELLEN. WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

WHO ARE YOU? WHA-- WHERE DID YOU FIND MY DOLL? GIVE IT TO ME! PLEEEASE-- GIVE IT BACK!

ALL RIGHT, BUT IF I DO GIVE IT TO YOU, ELLIE, DO YOU PROMISE TO PLAY DADDY'S GAME?

DADDY'S SPECIAL GAME?

ANHHAHA HAHHHHH!



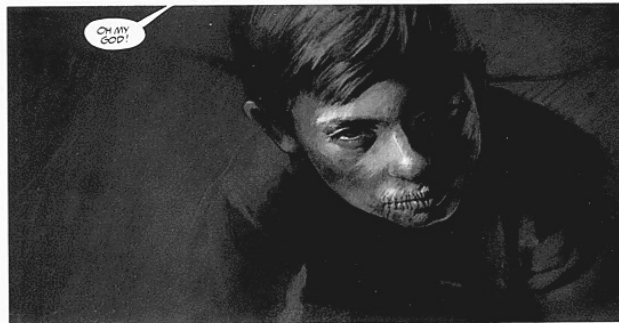
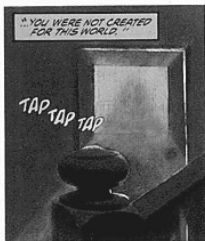
"NOOO!"

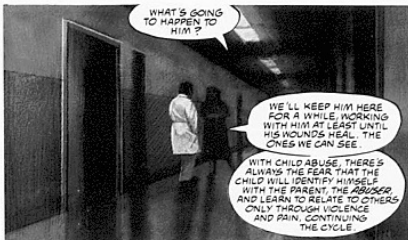
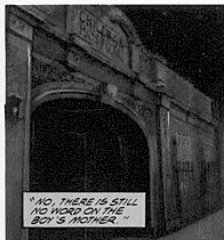
"INSIDE THE BOX, THE CHAMBER, LEVIATHAN WILL UN-TWIST YOUR SOUL, ELLEN. HE WILL RE-MAKE YOUR GUILT, YOUR SHAME, YOUR HURT, INTO YOUR POWER, YOUR WEAPON.

"YOU WILL CAUSE SUCH TERRIBLE PAIN AND IN TURN YOU WILL BE TORTURED BY THE PAIN YOU CAUSE.

"YES, ELLEN. YOU ARE PERFECT FOR THIS PLACE.

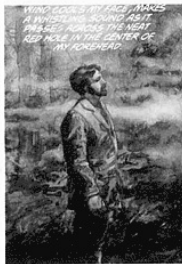
"GO, CHILD..."





The End

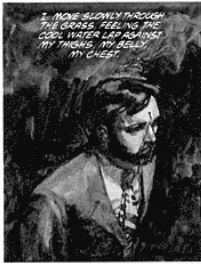
THE DREAM IS ALWAYS THE SAME. I'M
STANDING IN BLACK WATER.



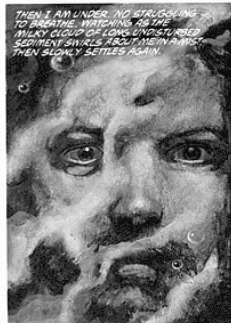
WIND COOES MY FACE, HARES
A WHISTLING SOUND AS IT
PASSES. CROSSES THE HEAT
RED HOLE IN THE CENTER OF
MY FOREHEAD.



REEDS AND TENDRILS OF RIVER
GRASS BEND AWAY FROM ME IN
THE BREEZE LIKE BRACKENING
ARMS URSING ME OUT OF THE
SHALLOWS.



I MOVE SLOWLY THROUGH
THE GRASS, FEELING THE
COOL WATER LAP AGAINST
MY THIGHS, MY BELLY,
MY CHEST.



THEN I AM UNDER. NO STRUGGLING
TO BREATHE. WATCHING AS THE
MILKY CLOUDS LONG UNDISTURBED
SEDIMENT SWIRLS ABOUT ME IN A MIST.
THEN SLOWLY SETTLES AGAIN.

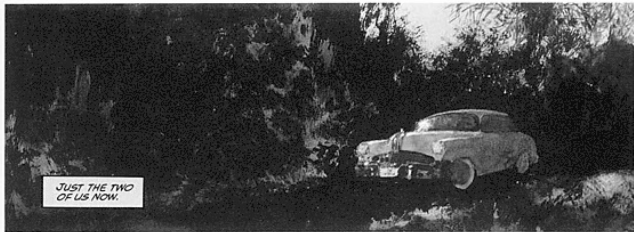


THEN, THROUGH THE GREY
VEL OF THE WATER, I SEE
A FACE MOVING TOWARD ME.
INDISTINCT AT FIRST, THE
FEATURES SLOWLY COALESCE.



I RECOGNIZE
BELASCO...

... AS THE
GREY
DEEPENS
INTO BLACK.



*JUST THE TWO
OF US NOW.*



*SIX YEARS. HARD TO
BELIEVE IT'S FINALLY
COMING TO AN END.*

Scott Hampton
writer/artist
John Van Fleet
artist
John Costanza
letterer

The TONTINE



BELASCO SET IT ALL UP BACK IN '45. THE WAR WAS COMING TO A CLOSE, AND WE WERE JUST DUMB ENOUGH AND CRAZY ENOUGH TO GO ALONG WITH IT. HE CALLED IT A "TONTINE." NONE OF US KNEW WHAT THAT WAS, SO HE EXPLAINED



"USUALLY IT'S WHERE EVERYBODY PUTS MONEY INTO A POT AND THE LAST GUY ALIVE TAKES IT ALL BUT THIS GAME WON'T BE FOR MONEY. IT'LL BE FOR SOMETHING A LOT MORE VALUABLE..."



EVERY YEAR FROM THAT DAY WE WERE TO MEET AT AN OLD GRIST MILL HIS FAMILY OWNED IN WISCONSIN. ONCE THERE, WE'D PLAY THE GAME. WE'D DO THIS UNTIL ONLY ONE MAN WAS LEFT, ONE...

...BENEFICIARY.



ONLY THE "GAME" WAS NO GAME. IT WAS RUSSIAN ROULETTE --AND WHEN BELASCO SAID "LOSE," HE MEANT IT.

BUT, I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF



WE WERE OUT THERE FOR A LONG TIME, AND WE GENERALLY PULLED SCOUTING DETAIL. WE WERE LUCKY--ALMOST TOO LUCKY. OUR WORST BATTLE SCARS WERE CALLOUSES FROM THE TRIGGERS OF OUR SPRINGFIELDS. WE COULDN'T BUY A PURPLE HEART. IT WAS UNCANNY.

I REMEMBER A NIGHT WHEN WE WERE ORDERED TO RECONNOITER THE FRINGE OF A GERMAN OUTPOST. LAND MINES ALL OVER THE PLACE.

THE OTHER GUYS DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE US AGAIN...



... AND THEY WERE RIGHT. WHILE WE WERE CRAWLING THROUGH THE MUD FEELING FOR METAL PRONGS, WE BECAME AWARE OF A LOW DRONE FROM OVERHEAD. A GERMAN SQUADRON HAD CHOSEN THAT PRECISE MOMENT TO COME CALLING.



BY THE TIME WE GOT BACK, THERE WAS NOBODY LEFT TO REPORT TO.

BELASCO WAS SQUAD LEADER, AND HE ALWAYS TOOK POINT. NOTHING SEEMED TO WORRY HIM. I'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYONE WHO WAS LESS AFRAID OF DYING. BEFORE EVERY MISSION HE'D PULL OUT AN ODD GUN (I DIDN'T KNOW THE MAKE. HE SAID HE'D BOUGHT IT IN NAPLES.), SPIN THE CHAMBER, PLACE THE MUZZLE AGAINST HIS TEMPLE-- AND PULL THE TRIGGER.



CARR CALLED HIM ON IT ONE NIGHT. HE SAID, "HELL BOY, EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THING AIN'T LOADED," AND THEN HE LAUGHED-- WE ALL DID.





BELASCO SMILED
FOR A MOMENT...

THINK!



... THEN, BEFORE CARR KNEW
WHAT WAS HAPPENING,
BRACED THE MUZZLE OF THE
GUN AGAINST HIS FORE-
HEAD, AND PULLED THE
TRIGGER.



WE HAD TO HOLD CARR BACK.
HE CALLED BELASCO A CRAZY
SON-OF-A-BITCH. TRIED
TO GET AT HIM.



BUT BELASCO ONLY SMILED.
HE POINTED THE PISTOL AT A
RAT THAT HAD MADE ITS WAY
INTO THE FOXHOLE--



--AND BLEW
ITS HEAD OFF



EVERYBODY
GOT VERY
QUIET
THEN.



BELASCO
LAUGHED. IT
WAS A FLAT,
DEAD
SOUND.

HE RELOADED, SPUN THE CHAMBER AGAIN.
THEN HE LAID THE GUN DOWN IN FRONT
OF US ALL. THAT WAS THE BEGINNING --
A GAUNTLET HAD BEEN THROWN DOWN,
A CHALLENGE TO MANHOOD...



...A CHALLENGE
ACCEPTED.

WE DIDN'T REALIZE THAT FIRST TIME THAT WE WOULD
GROW TO ACTUALLY LOOK FORWARD TO IT, TO NEED IT.

WE WERE SOLDIERS. SOMEONE HAD
SAID, "YOU COMMIT TO THE KILL OR
YOU DIE." AND WE WERE COMMITTED.
WE KILLED MEN COMFORTABLY FROM
A DISTANCE, AND WE KILLED THEM
BRUTALLY AT CLOSE QUARTERS.

WE WERE BECOMING NUMB.
THAT GAME BROUGHT US
BACK, SET OUR NERVES ON
FIRE. SPINNING THE
CHAMBER, LOADING THE
GUN AGAINST YOUR
HEAD, YOU COULD
FEEL THE BLOOD
DRUMMING IN YOUR
TEMPLES, POUNDING
ONE IN SIX.
THOSE WERE
YOUR CHANCES.
IT BECAME OUR
DRUG--EQUAL
PARTS TERROR
AND EXHILARATION.

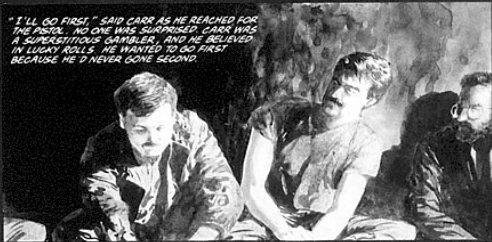


NEEDLESS TO SAY, BY THE NIGHT
WE AGREED TO THE COMPACT I
THINK WE WERE ALL AT LEAST
A LITTLE INSANE.

THAT NIGHT EACH OF US, IN TURN,
CUT OUR FOREARMS, MIXING
OUR BLOOD IN AN OLD K-RATION
TIN. THEN WE SAT IN A CIRCLE
AND PASSED THE TIN AROUND.
EACH MAN IN TURN TOOK A SIP,
THEN PASSED IT ON, ENDING WITH
RELASCO, WHO DRAINED IT. THEN
HE PLACED THE FAMILIAR GUN
IN FRONT OF US AND SAID "IT'S
TIME TO PUT AWAY CHILDISH
THINGS."

THE WAR WAS COMING TO AN
END. THE ADDICTION WAS ALL
WE HAD LEFT.

"I'LL GO FIRST," SAID CARR AS HE REACHED FOR THE PISTOL. NO ONE WAS SURPRISED. CARR WAS A SUPERSTITIOUS GAMBLER, AND HE BELIEVED IN LUCKY ROLLS. HE WANTED TO GO FIRST BECAUSE HE'D NEVER GONE SECOND.



CARR'S ATTITUDE WAS DIFFERENT FROM MINE. I REMEMBER THINKING ABOUT ALL THE TIMES I'D HEARD THE CYLINDER SLOWLY TURNING TO MEET THE HAMMER, THE HOLLOW CLACK THAT TOLD ME I WAS STILL THERE. WE'D BEEN JEERING AT DEATH FOR MONTHS, BUT HE'D BEEN TOO BUSY TO BOTHER WITH US.



NOW THE FIGHTING WAS ALMOST OVER AND CARR WAS ABOUT TO THUMB HIS NOSE ONE MORE TIME. ONLY THIS TIME DEATH WAS THERE TO SEE IT.

I WAS SURE THAT CARR WAS GOING TO PUT A BULLET THROUGH HIS HEAD, BUT I WAS WRONG WHEN HE WAS FINISHED HE LAID THE GUN DOWN WITH A LOOK OF SATISFACTION, A LOOK THAT SAID KID STUFF, AS IF HE KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN THAT WAY.



DORN WAS ABOUT TO PICK UP THE GUN, BUT BELASCO BEAT HIM TO IT.



AS HE PUT THE GUN TO HIS HEAD HE SAID SOMETHING. I'LL NEVER FORGET HE SAID, "SEE YOU." THE BLAST WAS DEAFENING IN THAT SMALL SPACE. DID HE KNOW? DID HE WANT TO DIE? IAN BELASCO, THE MAN WITH ALL THE ANSWERS, WASN'T SAYING.





WE ALL MET AT BELASCO'S CAR.
MILLER GOT IN FIRST. I GOT
IN NEXT. CARR AND I WERE
THE ONLY TWO LEFT. I WAS
WITH HIM AND HIS CAR.
DOES ANYONE



BELASCO WAS THERE TOO.
HE WOULDN'T MISS THIS
FOR THE WORLD.



ONCE INSIDE, WE WERE SURPRISED
TO DISCOVER A LARGE VICTORIAN
TABLE, WITH SIX CHAIRS NEATLY
ARRANGED AROUND IT, STANDING
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM.
EXCEPT FOR THESE, THE PLACE
WAS EMPTY, GUTTED.



MILLER PULLED THE GUN FROM
HIS NEW LEATHER SATCHEL.



WHILE CARR LIT A
KEROSENE LAMP
THAT HE'D BROUGHT
AND PLACED IT IN
THE CENTER OF
THE TABLE.



I WAS ELECTED TO PUT THE BULLET
IN THE CHAMBER. I REMEMBER
THE COLD FEEL OF THE CYLINDER
AGAINST MY PALM. THE CLICKING,
RATCHETING SOUND IT MADE AS
IT SPUN, THEN SLOWED AND
FINALLY STOPPED.



CARR SPUN THE REVOLVER AND
MY HEART HAMMERED LIKE A
PISTON INSIDE MY CHEST AS THE
GUN SLOWED AND SLOWED AND
PASSED ME FOR THE LAST TIME
TO POINT AT MILLER DIRECTLY
ACROSS FROM ME.



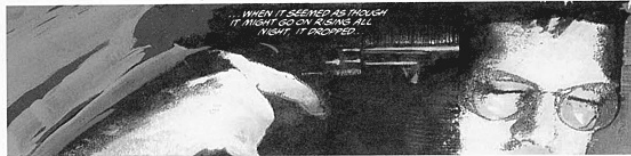
HE PICKED IT UP BY THE
BARREL FIRST, THEN
TURNED THE WALNUT
HANDLE INTO HIS PALM
AND LOOKED AROUND
AT US.



THEN, FROWNING WITH
DETERMINATION, HE QUICKLY
POINTED THE TIP OF THE
BARREL AT HIS TEMPLE, AS
THOUGH HE'D ALREADY
THOUGHT ABOUT IT, ALREADY
DECIDED TO POINT IT THERE.



HIS FINGER TENSED AND THE
CYLINDER STARTED GOING
AROUND. THE HAMMER
DRAWING BACK AS HE
TIGHTENED ON THE TRIGGER.
I REMEMBER MOSTLY THAT
HAMMER, THAT HUGE HAMMER
GOING UP AND UP, BACK AND
BACK.



... WHEN IT SEEMED AS THOUGH
IT MIGHT GO ON RISING ALL
NIGHT, IT DROPPED.



...IT DROPPED, AND MILLER'S BRAINS EXPLODED OUT THE OTHER SIDE OF HIS HEAD, SHATTERING THE ROTTEN TIMBERS OF THE WALL BEHIND HIM.



THE BLAST HAD FORCED HIS LEFT EYE FROM ITS SOCKET AND IT HUNG DOWN ON HIS CHEEK LIKE A RUDE FLUM. SOMEHOW, THOUGH, THE DISFIGURED FEATURES STILL REGISTERED SURPRISE - ALMOST AS IF HE DIDN'T REALIZE HE WAS DEAD.



THEN EVERYBODY STARTED MOVING. CARR GRABBED THE GUN OUT OF MILLER'S GRASP.



NO ONE SPOKE WHILE CARR AND I TIED CINDER BLOCKS TO HIM WITH BAILING WIRE, THEN WADED OUT INTO THE TARN THAT ONCE HAD BEEN A STREAM, AND SANK THE DEAD MAN IN BLACK WATER.



JENNINGS STARTED MILLER'S CHEVY AND DROVE IT IN AS WELL. THEN WE ALL LEFT.



THE RELIEF, THE EXHILARATION HIT ME ON THE WAY BACK. I DROVE ALL NIGHT AND I NEVER LET THE SPEEDOMETER DIP BELOW EIGHTY.

AS BELASCO HAD PROMISED, MY FORTUNES SEEMED TO DOUBLE AFTERWARDS. JUST AS THEY HAD AFTER HE'D GONE. IT WAS AS IF EACH OF US INHERITED A SHARE OF THE DEAD MAN'S LUCK.

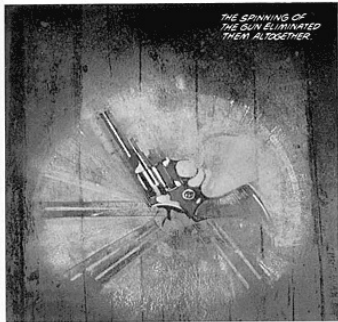
AND SOMETHING ELSE: SOMETHING MORE VALUABLE. HIS DISCARDABLE FORCE-- HIS ABILITY TO DUPE-- HIS DEATH.



WHEN I RETURNED TO THAT DILAPIDATED BUILDING THE NEXT YEAR, I EXPERIENCED A FEELING OF HAVING RETURNED THROUGH TIME. THE ROOM WAS UNCHANGED, EXACTLY AS WE'D LEFT IT. I HALF EXPECTED IT LLER TO WALK IN.



HIS CHAIR REMAINED EMPTY. THANK GOD, AND THAT GRIM DIFFERENCE BEGAN TO DISSOLVE MY FEELINGS OF DETAIL.



THE SPINNING OF THE GUN ELIMINATED THEM ALTOGETHER.



THIS TIME IT POINTED DEAD AT ME.

SUDDENLY I WAS SCARED MORE SCARED THAN I'D EVER BEEN BEFORE.



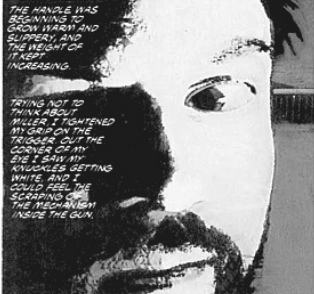
BECAUSE NOW I HAD SOMETHING TO LOSE, I SUPPOSE. THE GUN FELT HEAVY AND GOLD IN MY HAND AS IT PRESSED AGAINST MY TEMPLE. IT HADN'T SEEMED HARD TO LIFT, BUT NOW THAT IT WAS THERE IT TOOK INCREDIBLE STRENGTH TO HOLD IT IN PLACE AND FIGHT THE URGE TO SIMPLY DROP IT ON THE FLOOR.

I REALIZED THEN THAT I HADN'T CHECKED THE DAMNED THING TO SEE THAT THERE WAS INDEED ONLY ONE BULLET IN IT. NOW DO I KNOW I COULD TRUST CARR AND HIS GUN? SUPPOSE HE'D PUT THAT SINGLE BULLET IN THE ONLY EMPTY CHAMBER?



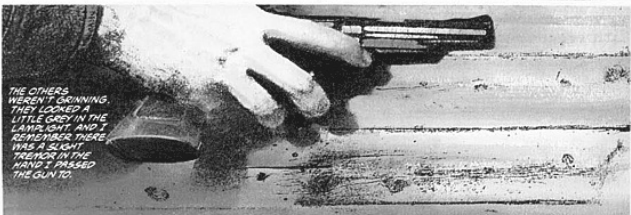
BUT THEN I THOUGHT HE WOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT. SUPPOSE THE GUN HAD POINTED AT HIM?

THE HANDLE WAS BEGINNING TO GROW WARM AND SLIPPERY, AND THE WEIGHT OF IT KEPT INCREASING.



TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT MILLER, I TIGHTENED MY GRIP ON THE TRIGGER, OUT THE CORNER OF MY EYE I SAW MY KNUCKLES GETTING WHITE, AND I COULD FEEL THE SCRAPING OF THE MECHANISM INSIDE THE GUN.

AND THEN THERE WAS THE HOLLOW CLICK OF THE COPPER FIRING PIN COMING DOWN ON NOTHING. I WAS GLAD I HADN'T EXAMINED THE GUN TO SEE WHERE THE BULLET WAS. I MAY HAVE EVEN SMILED, BROKEN INTO A STUPID GRIN AS I BLEW OUT MY BREATH, GRINNING TO STILL BE ALIVE.



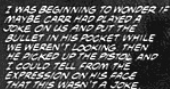
THE OTHERS WEREN'T GRINNING. THEY LOOKED A LITTLE GREY IN THE LAMPLIGHT, AND I REMEMBER THERE WAS A SLIGHT TREMOR IN THE HAND I PASSED THE GUN TO.



JENNINGS
SHRIEKED
LIKE A
COMMANDO
TAKING
THE
HILL WHEN
HE DID IT.



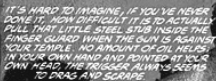
CARR, AS USUAL, SAID
NOTHING, JUST POINTED
THE GUN AND SLOWLY
SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER.



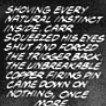
I WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER IF
MAYBE CARR HAD PLAYED A
JOKER ON US AND PUT THE
BULLET IN HIS POCKET WHILE
WE WEREN'T LOOKING. THEN
HE PICKED UP THE PISTOL, AND
I COULD TELL FROM THE
EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE
THAT THIS WASN'T A JOKE.



CARR'S HAND
SHOOK AS HE
POINTED THE GUN
TO HIS HEAD. WE KNEW THAT
ODDS NOW WERE EXACTLY
50-50, BUT THEY PROBABLY
FELT MORE LIKE 80-20 AGAINST
TO CARR. THE BULLET HAD BEEN
IN THAT GUN TOO LONG. IT WAS
TIME FOR IT TO GO OUT. WE
WERE ALL THINKING IT.



IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE, IF YOU'VE NEVER
DONE IT, HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO ACTUALLY
PULL THAT LITTLE STEEL STUB INSIDE THE
FINGER GUARD WHEN THE GUN IS AGAINST
YOUR TEMPLE. NO AMOUNT OF OIL HELPS.
IN YOUR OWN HAND AND POINTED AT YOUR
OWN HEAD, THE TRIGGER ALWAYS SEEMS
TO DRAG AND SCRAPE.



SHOWING EVERY
NATURAL INSTINCT
INSIDE, CARR
SQUEEZED HIS EYES
SHUT AND FORCED
THE TRIGGER BACK.
THE UNBREAKABLE
COPPER FIRING PIN
CAME DOWN ON
NOTHING, ONCE
MORE.

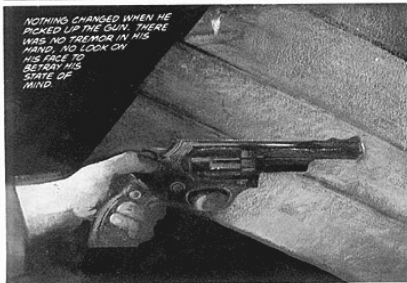


CARR SNATCHED THE GUN AWAY FROM HIS HEAD AND EXCLAIMED, "YEAH!" GRINNING FROM EAR TO EAR.

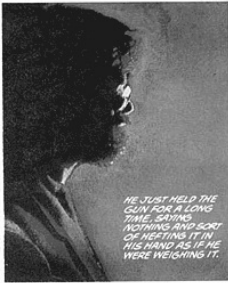
THEN, SINCE WE WEREN'T GRINNING BACK, HE STOPPED-- AND LOOKED AT DORN



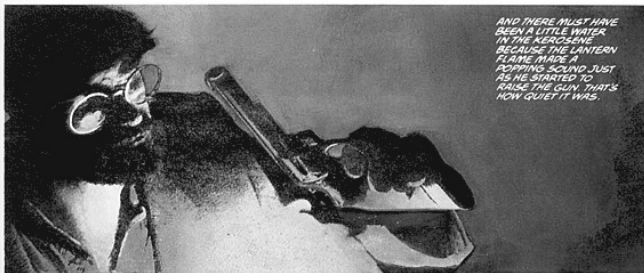
BUT DORN WASN'T LOOKING AT US JUST THEN; HE WAS LOOKING AT THE GUN ON THE TABLE IN FRONT OF HIM.



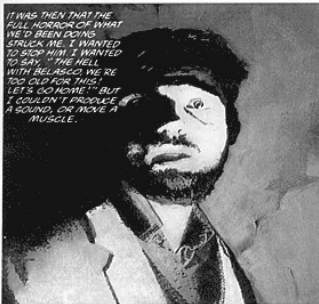
NOTHING CHANGED WHEN HE PICKED UP THE GUN. THERE WAS NO TREMOR IN HIS HAND, NO LOOK ON HIS FACE TO BETRAY HIS STATE OF MIND.



HE JUST HELD THE GUN FOR A LONG TIME, SAYING NOTHING AND SORT OF HEFTING IT IN HIS HAND AS IF HE WERE WEIGHING IT.



AND THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A LITTLE WATER IN THE KEROSENE BECAUSE THE LANTERN FLAME MADE A POPPING SOUND JUST AS HE STARTED TO RAISE THE GUN. THAT'S HOW QUIET IT WAS.



IT WAS THEN THAT THE FULL HORROR OF WHAT WE'D BEEN DOING STRUCK ME. I WANTED TO STOP HIM. I WANTED TO SAY, "THE MELL WITH BELASCO, WE'RE TOO OLD FOR THIS! LET'S GO HOME!" BUT I COULDN'T PRODUCE A SOUND, OR MOVE A MUSCLE.



I COULDN'T EVEN BLINK. I WATCHED IN MUTE HORROR AS DORN OPENED HIS MOUTH AND STUCK THE FOUR INCH BARREL INSIDE AGAINST THE ROOF.



AND STILL THOSE EYES LOOKED STRAIGHT OUT. IT WAS LIKE HE'D FORGOTTEN WE WERE THERE. INSTEAD, HE WAS STARING RIGHT INTO THAT GREY WINDOW OVER-LOOKING THE TARN.

FINALLY, HE PULLED THE TRIGGER. NOT SLOWLY, BUT WITH A TUG THAT TOOK NO TIME AT ALL. THE WAY A STRONG MAN MIGHT PULL HIS OWN TOOTH.



THE BLAST SNAPPED HIS HEAD BACK AND TO THE SIDE--SPUN HIM AROUND. DEATH STRUCK DORN DOWN THE WAY ANOTHER MAN MIGHT, WITH A ROUNDHOUSE TO THE HEAD, KNOCKING HIM OFF HIS CHAIR.

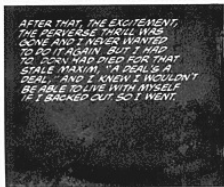


IN AN INSTANT THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT, NO BLOOD, NO EVIDENCE OF HIS EVER HAVING BEEN THERE, EXCEPT FOR THE SOUND OF HIS BODY THRASHING BENEATH THE TABLE.

THEN THAT STOPPED--AND THERE WAS NOTHING.



DORN'S DEATH BOTHERS ME YET. HE WAS THE BEST OF US, THE ONE WHO ENJOYED DORRINGS, BULLETS THE LEAST, AND THE ONE MOST LIKELY TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR YOU. IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING, HE WAS AN HONORABLE MAN.



AFTER THAT, THE EXCITEMENT, THE PERVERSE THRILL WAS GONE AND I NEVER WANTED TO DO IT AGAIN. BUT I HAD TO. DORN HAD DIED FOR THAT STALE MAXIM, "A DEAL'S A DEAL," AND I KNEW I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I BACKED OUT. SO I WENT.



AFTER DORN, A YEAR PASSED LIKE A WEEK, AND I'D FIND MYSELF AROUND THAT CRUMMY TABLE WITH THOSE GUNS AGAIN.

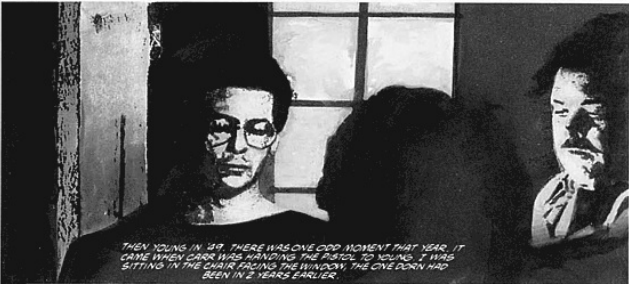


'48 WAS JENNINGS, AND IT
WAS OVER PRETTY QUICKLY

HE WAS THE FIRST MAN
UP. LIKE MILLER, JENNINGS
HAD BROUGHT A CADILLAC
THAT YEAR AND CARR BALKED
AT DRIVING IT INTO THE TARN.



HE SAID IT WAS "SUCH A
WASTE." SO I DID IT.



THEN YOUNG IN '49, THERE WAS ONE ODD MOMENT THAT YEAR. IT
CAME WHEN CARR WAS HANDING THE PISTOL TO YOUNG. I WAS
SITTING IN THE CHAIR FACING THE WINDOW. THE ONE DORN HAD
BEEN IN 2 YEARS EARLIER.



AS I WATCHED THE GUN
BEING PASSED MY EYE WAS
DRAWN TO A SHADY
FIGURE NEAR THE EDGE
OF THE TARN.



HE SEEMED TO BE WATCHING
US. NOT MOVING. JUST
STANDING THERE--WATCHING



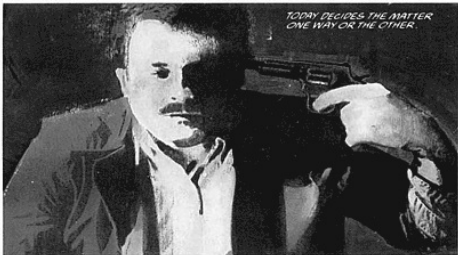
I WAS ABOUT TO SAY
SOMETHING, WARN YOUNG
WHEN THE GUN WENT OFF.
HE TOOK LONGER THAN
ANYONE ELSE, THREE, FOUR
MINUTES TO DIE.

WHEN I LOOKED UP
AGAIN THE FIGURE
WAS GONE.

IT'S 1950 NOW AND THE TONTINE IS
COMING TO ITS END. TODAY ONE OF
US GETS TO FIND OUT IF BELASCO
WAS ON THE LEVEL OR NOT.



TODAY DECIDES THE MATTER
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.



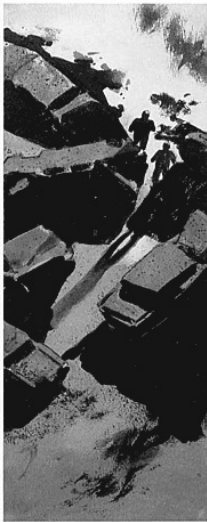
I'M TIRED NOW, TIRED
OF WONDERING, TIRED
OF WORRYING ABOUT
IT. I DON'T EVEN KNOW
IF I WANT IT ANYMORE.



I'LL JUST BE GLAD
WHEN IT'S OVER.









PHILADELPHIA, THE
CITY OF BROTHERLY
LOVE

SHOOT HIGH BREAK LOW

Erik Saltzgraber
writer
Mark Bloodworth
artist
Phil Felix
letterer





FORGET
IT, MAN.

I AIN'T GOT NOthin'; I
AIN'T GOT NOthin'; AND
WE BOTH KNOW YOU AIN'T
GONNA BOTHER WITH
THE PAPER WORK.



BETTER LUCK
NEXT TIME,
OFFICER.



GOD, I WISH WE HAD
SOME WAY TO CLEAN
THIS STUFF UP...

A PROBLEM. A GAME
WITHOUT WINNERS. A
PUZZLE.



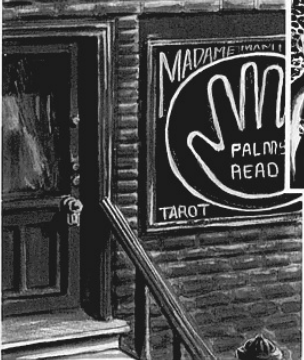
IN ANOTHER DARK CORNER
OF THIS DARK CITY, A
SOLUTION PRESENTS ITSELF.

THREE WEEKS AGO, MADAME
MAYNICH RECEIVED THIS GIFT
THROUGH HER REGULAR CORRESPOND-
ENCE. TWO WEEKS AGO, SHE SET
TO SOLVING IT. SINCE LAST WEEK,
SHE'S SEEN NO CUSTOMERS.



...AND IN FURTHER NEWS,
FATHER ABERNETHY, A CATHOLIC PRIEST,
HAS ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO
GO ON THE AIR IN AN ATTEMPT TO
COUNTER THE MODERLY POPULAR TEL-
EVANGELIST SAYLES, WHOM HE
CHARACTERIZED AS "PREACHING
THE WORST OF WHAT RELIGION
HAD TO OFFER..."

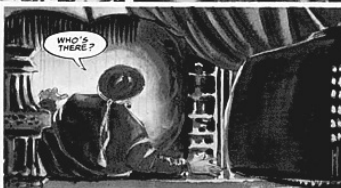
FOR TWO DAYS, SHE'S NOT
MOVED FROM HER CHAIR--
EVEN TO SHUT OFF THE
ANNOYING NOISE OF THE
TELEVISION.



HER DEDICATION WILL NOT
GO UNPUNISHED.



WHA...



WHO'S
THERE?



NAME'S
ATREUS AND
I WANT TO
TELL YOUR
FORTUNE.



...AND BABY,
IT AIN'T THAT
GREAT.



CITY HALL, ANOTHER
FACET OF THE PUZZLE,
ANOTHER PIECE IN THE
GAME.

LOOK, I DON'T CARE *WHAT* IT
TAKES, BUT I NEED CONVICTIONS.
I'M ON THE ROPES AS IT IS. I CAN'T
HAVE ANOTHER RACIAL SCANDAL
LIKE THAT... "INCIDENT"... THREE
YEARS AGO.

YEAH, IT NEVER PAYS
TO FIRE BOMB A CITY
BLOCK DURING AN
ELECTION YEAR.



LOUIS, I KNOW YOU'VE GOT
NO CAUSE TO LOOK OUT FOR ME,
BUT IT'S YOUR ASS TOO IF WE CAN'T
CAP THIS THING. FOUR RACIAL
INCIDENTS IN THE PAST MONTH IS
TOO MANY.

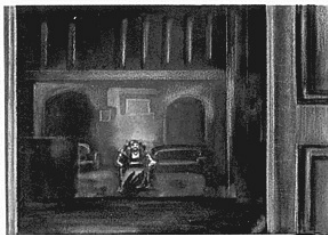
HEY, MR. MAYOR, WE'RE GIVIN' IT ALL
WE GOT. IT'S NOT THE DEPARTMENT'S
FAULT YOU PEOPLE WON'T TALK TO US.
I MEAN, THAT PEOPLE OF A CERTAIN
"RACIAL TENDENCY" HAVE BEEN LESS
THAN COOPERATIVE.



CAN THE SARCASM AND DO WHATEVER YOU CAN. AND VANESSA,
YOU SEE TO IT THAT WHATEVER BUSTS WE DO COME UP WITH,
WE GOT CONVICTIONS ON.

OKAY,
PEOPLE?







THE 18TH DISTRICT STATION
HOUSE. AN UGLY PLACE
FOR ANYONE TO SPEND
THEIR DAY...



DIDTA HEAR ABOUT LAST NIGHT?
ANOTHER RACE PROBLEM IN THE
21ST. TWO WHITE KIDS SHOT A
COUPLE OF BLACK KIDS. SAID
THEY TRIED TO STEAL A CAR.



IN THE 21ST? RIGHT.
MORE LIKELY DRAGGED
THOSE BLACK KIDS OVER
THERE AND TOOK THEIR
TIME OFFING 'EM.
HAD SOME FUN.

SO YOU JUST
ASSUME THE WHITE
KIDS WERE LYING?

GUESS IT
DOESN'T MATTER
MUCH EITHER
WAY. THEY PROBABLY
HAD IT COMING TO
THEM.



JILL - BABY LESTER -
MOLESTER. CAPTAIN WANTS
TO SEE YOU IN HIS OFFICE.
YESTERDAY.

COME IN,
OFFICERS.

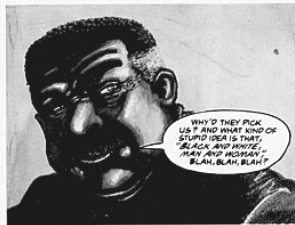
YES SIR,
CAPTAIN
ARNOLD.



THESE TWO GENTLEMEN ARE CHIEF OF
POLICE DI CINZA, WHOM YOU SHOULD RECOGNIZE,
AND ASSISTANT D.A. MATTHEW J. DAY, WHOM
YOU MAY NOT. THEY HAVE AN IDEA THEY'D LIKE
TO DISCUSS WITH YOU. GENTLEMEN...









A WORD WITH YOU IF I MAY, OFFICER GEORGE. I KNOW I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH OF THIS CITY'S HOPES ARE RIDING ON YOUR SHOULDERS.

NO SIR.

I'M OFFERING YOU A CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BOTH FOR YOURSELF AND FOR PHILADELPHIA. YOU DO WELL HERE AND THERE'S NO TELLING HOW FAR YOU'LL RISE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YES SIR.

THERE'S JUST TWO THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO: FOLLOW MY ORDERS PERFECTLY, AND DON'T SCREW UP.

I CAN HANDLE IT, SIR

THAT'S WHY I CHOSE YOU.

THIS MIGHT BE OKAY...

IN ANOTHER PART OF CITY HALL,
A FAR GUY FROM THE ANGER'S
OFFICE...

"DOES EVERYONE
KNOW THE SCORE?"

"YES."

GOOD. TELL THEM TO SHOW
UP AT 52 CATHERINE ST. SHORTLY
AFTER MIDNIGHT. TELL THEM TO
SHOW UP ALONE. BUT WELL
ARMED.

LISTEN, IF WE'RE GOING TO
ENTER INTO SOME KIND OF
FALSTAFF BARGAIN HERE I
WANT TO KNOW WHAT OUR
ANGLE IS. I'M NOT JUST
SOME FLUNKY.

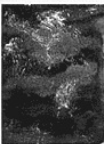
NEITHER AM I, HOMEBOY. I'M NO MEPHISTO
GROVELING FOR PERMISSION. YOU WANNA
KNOW YOUR ANGLE?

IT'S LIKE THIS: I'LL BLOW
YOUR HEAD OFF. I'LL HAVE A GOOD
TIME WITH IT, TOO. AND THEN I'LL
FIND SOMEBODY ELSE TO HELP
ME. GOT IT, SMART GUY?

SWELL! WE ARE
GOING TO HAVE
SOME FUN WORKING
TOGETHER!

YE-YES,
I GOT IT.





THE END



I REALLY DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT AIDS. IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM. NOT THAT I DON'T GET MY SHARE OF PUS--



--EXCUSE ME, NOT THAT I DON'T GET LAID OR ANYTHING. I DO. PLENTY. BUT I'M NOT AT RISK. I MEAN I'M STRAIGHT. SO I SURE CAN'T CATCH IT. HA! HA!



...RIGHT?

IN THE CONSIDERED OPINION OF DR. MORRIS DILLIARD, LIFE IS A SERIES OF PUZZLES TO BE SOLVED. A SIMPLISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD, PERHAPS. BUT ONE THAT LED TO WHAT SOME MIGHT SAY IS AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF PERSONAL SUCCESS FOR THE FIFTY-TWO YEAR OLD DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR DISEASE CONTROL.

THIS MORNING, AS EVERY MORNING, DR. DILLIARD IS RELAXING IN THE LAST FEW MOMENTS BEFORE ANOTHER DAY'S LABOR BY TRYING TO SOLVE A SIMPLE PUZZLE.

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS PARTICULAR PUZZLE IS A LAMENT CONFIGURATION.

AND THE REWARD FOR THOSE INDUSTRIOUS ENOUGH TO SOLVE IT IS A ONE-WAY TICKET TO HELL.

DR. DILLIARD?
DR. GIOELI IS
HERE TO SEE
YOU.

YES, DILLIARD WILL SOLVE THE PUZZLE.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE SCARY PART...

SEND
HER IN.

Dwayne McDullie
D.C. Chichester
writers
Dennis Conan
pencils/color art
George Pratt
inks

Passion







HERE'S WHAT YOU CAME TO SEE. ARGUABLY
THE MOST ADVANCED COMPUTER IN THE WORLD,
A FIFTH GENERATION *MIDI*. ONE OF ONLY
THREE CURRENTLY IN OPERATION.

I NEED
IT, MORRIS.

UNQUESTIONABLY, YOUR
PROJECT REQUIRES HUNDREDS
OF HOURS OF COMPUTER TIME.



I CAME HERE SPECIFICALLY TO USE THAT MACHINE. I'M OBSESSED WITH FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE AIDS PROBLEM.

MIDI IS THE ONLY TOOL I NEED TO UNRAVEL THE DISEASE'S MYSTERIES. I'LL DO ANYTHING TO BE ABLE TO USE IT.



DICELI, TIME ON THE MIDI IS NEAR PRICELESS. EVERY HOUR I GIVE YOU MEANS ONE HOUR LESS FOR SOME OTHER SCIENTIST.



IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DEFEND GIVING SO MUCH TIME TO ANY ONE RESEARCHER, EVEN ONE AS BRILLIANT AS YOU.



BUT I'M WILLING TO DO SO, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS. IF YOU'RE WILLING TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME, I'M WILLING TO... RECIPROCATE.

I HATE TO HAVE TO TURN YOU DOWN OUTRIGHT. I'LL HAVE TO CAREFULLY RECONSIDER YOUR PROPOSAL.

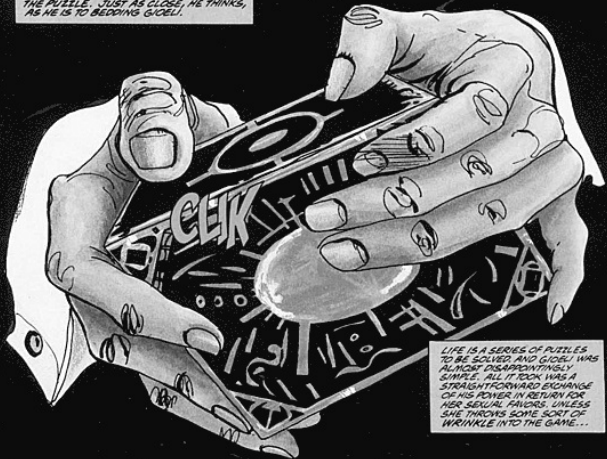


LIKEWISE, DOCTOR.





DILLIARD WAS VERY NEARLY SOLVED THE PUZZLE. JUST AS CLOSE, HE THINKS, AS HE IS TO BEDDING GIDEL!



LIFE IS A SERIES OF PUZZLES TO BE SOLVED. AND GIDEL WAS ALMOST DISAPPOINTINGLY SIMPLE. ALL IT TOOK WAS A STRAIGHTFORWARD EXCHANGE OF HIS POWER IN RETURN FOR HER SEXUAL FAVORS. UNLESS SHE THROWS SOME SORT OF WRINKLE INTO THE GAME...

...NO. SHE'LL ACCEPT THE DEAL. WHAT ELSE CAN SHE DO? CONSUMMATION IS ALMOST BEYOND THE POINT. THE PUZZLE OF GIGEL HAS BEEN SOLVED JUST AS SURELY...





MY
CONGRATULATIONS,
DR. DILLIARD.





SHOULD YOU ACCEPT, YOU WILL
RECEIVE AN ETERNITY OF PUZZLES
TO SOLVE. YOU WILL DWELL IN A
WORLD OF INFINITE PLEASURE,
PLEASURE SO INTENSE THAT IT IS
INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM
SWEET PAIN.



OF COURSE, IN RETURN,
I EXPECT YOU TO DO
SOMETHING FOR ME.



THE CHOICE IS YOURS, MORRIS
DILLIARD. IS IT HELL? OR
HELL WITH HONOR? *



D-DO WITH ME AS
YOU WILL, MY LORD.





IT'S A GOOD FIT.

THIS OFFICE COULD
DO WITH A BIT OF
TIDYING UP, THOUGH.





IT'S A TRADE-OFF, THE WAY I FIGURE IT.



SEX AND DRUGS ARE BOTH PLEASURE FOR A PRICE. THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, THIS DISEASE JUST UNDERLINES THE THING.



YOU GOT TO RISK SOMETHING TO GET SOMETHING ELSE. LIFE IS FULL OF TRADEOFFS.

CASEY GIDELI, PH.D. WANTS ONE THING ABOVE ALL ELSE.



SHE WANTS TO BE THE ONE WHO SOLVES WHAT IS, IN HER CONSIDERED OPINION, THE MOST DIFFICULT PUZZLE ON EARTH. SHE WANTS TO CURE AIDS.

CASEY GIOELI, PhD, IS BOTH
AWESOMELY INTELLIGENT AND
RELENTLESSLY DRIVEN. SHE
ALWAYS HAS BEEN.



CASEY GIOELI, PhD, HAS ALWAYS
BEEN WILLING TO DO WHATEVER
IT TOOK IN ORDER TO GET WHAT
SHE WANTS.



CASEY GIOELI, PhD, ALWAYS
GETS THE RIGHT ANSWERS.



AND IF GETTING THE RIGHT ANSWER
MEANS SHE HAS TO SLEEP WITH THIS
REPULSIVE LITTLE TOAD, THAT'S JUST
WHAT SHE'LL DO.



MORRIS? I'VE BEEN
THINKING, AND I WAS
WONDERING IF YOU'D LIKE
TO DISCUSS MY PROPOSAL
OVER DINNER.



LITTLE WOULD
PLEASE ME
MORE...

THE END

CLIVE BARKER

*Bestselling Author of
The Great and Secret Show*



*The
dream
of
the
Mystics
is
coming
true.*



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*Believe
in*
IMAJICA



Kennedy must still
 please the order of Robert Kennedy
 the spirit of John F. Kennedy do not
 forget to become any more of a

Δ Δ 1 2 4 Δ 5 6

we believe that Robert F. Kennedy must
 be sacrificed for the cause of the
 poor exploited people

we believe that we must
 such action and
 the fact that so
 many so many





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